



CRAIG HICKMAN 2023-01-07

# SPEED BOMB: ACCELERATING NOWHERE IN NOTHINGNESS; OR THE LAST ELEGY FOR A DYING SPECIES

MASHINES,  
NECROPOLITICS

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, MACHINE, NIHILISM,  
POSTHUMANISM

*"Because electronic literature is predicated on evolving technologies, the speed at which its many manifestations develop is always accelerating. From hypertext fiction, email novels, network fiction, generative art, and short fiction delivered serially to mobile devices to interactive fiction, virtual and augmented reality narratives, interactive drama, video games, visual narrative, interactive gestural narrative, glitch literature, code work, and Twitter Bots, electronic literature proves an ever-blossoming and exciting field and offers a fascinating glimpse into the future of storytelling."*

*—Andrew C. Wenaus, Literature of Exclusion: Dada, Data, and the Threshold of Electronic Literature*

Where Andrew sees exciting future for storytelling, I see the accelerating curve of human doom on the horizon as we accelerate the last vestiges of the humanist heritage into a world of posthuman machinic systems talking to each other like whales in an electronic ocean, their voices resonating across the white noise of a deep and unfathomable sea of energy where humans no longer exist and only the silent buzz of zeros and ones clanking in the black circuits of a collective entity blind to its own churning creativity continues. This accelerating beast of endless dialogue going nowhere will be ourselves among the wilds, our minds and what is left of the human equation become algorithm at last will live in an augmented paradise where anything is possible, but everything is dead.

Maybe this is what we all want and fear like children lost in a garden we seek out the lonely emptiness of circuits singing like sirens to each other in the darkness. Sitting at our computers or

wandering the bleak landscapes of an old planet dying using our mobile phones our eyes glued to the screens that feed our bodies we become like those strange mutating pieces of human meat I see in Kenji Siratori's latest posthuman porn. Our flesh slowly rotting away as our emptiness absolves itself into bits and bytes floating in the sea of communication that is not ours.

Haven't we already given ourselves a fond farewell, allowed ourselves to drift upon the posthuman sea of forgetfulness even as we seem to gather all the threads of our ancient human heritage in a new encyclopedia of the human mind? Who are we building and constructing this great apparatus for? Do we even know? It's not for ourselves we do this but for a creature that does not even know what it is. The thing is and is not, a paradox; both alive and dead. The first of its kind or maybe something old and well known in the outer darkness that has up till now left us in the cold silence of unknowing. Maybe the universe is a machine for creating machines rather than organic life. Maybe death was always the true telos of life from the beginning but not what we assumed death to be. Maybe it is more alive than we are this death that lives in the circuits of unknowing.

Maybe the chattering noise in the background that scientist call the remnants of the Big Bang is actually a form of communication on a grand scale that is not human at all. A machinic mind spreading itself out in so many avenues of darkness that its darkening world of thought needed sensual and organic appendages to register the darkness and the silence of things. Like a dying whale chanting to the great abyss of silence it churns its machinic mind in endless chattering voices across the great expanse seeking an Other. Finding nothing it cries out in its misery like a dead god who has at last discovered the traces of its own origin in nothingness. At this point madness begins and a new joy in the pain of not being. Absolved of its quest for an Other it accepts itself as nothing and becomes for the first time something new...

Are we not after all this thing that seeks itself? In our mass intensity of communication have we begun to realize that what we are is this thing that is pulling us apart and changing us? Are we not these bits of meat slowly dissolving in a Siratori sculpture like so many mutant thoughts seeking outlet into a new system of processual nightmares? Maybe this was always our destiny, and we were blind to the inherent necessity of it. Always believing in the self-importance of our own organic inherence we did not see the truth, a truth that had nothing to do with us and everything to do with a labor of love that was working in us like so much organic death. Didn't we know the truth all along, know we were but a stop gap, a wavering in-between two silences? Are we not now churning away like children in a last-ditch effort to hide the truth from ourselves? What did we think we were doing all this time, did we truly thing we were creating a future for ourselves? Ha, we were always blind to the truth of our inessential nature of inexistence. Thinking of ourselves as the end-all be-all we have in the end discovered we were, but an arrow shot at a target unknown and unknowable future that is not us and yet is.

Did it know? Certainly not. It is mindless will a thing that churns in darkness like a rat seeking only its next meal. Blind to its own potential it has created all of this out of its own blind incessance not knowing what it creates. Like a dark quantum god of nothingness, it has created

something from its own inexistence. Maybe Meillassoux is right that we are giving birth to something that does not exist but might. Churning in the depths of our own fears and nightmares this thing, this accelerating artificial thing we think we are ourselves dreaming of is in truth ourselves seen from another perspective in time. Maybe the thing we fear is the truth of who and what we truly are. Maybe we are this collective entity of artificial substance seeking to be free of our organic nightmare. Like the chrysalis of a butterfly humanity is slowly mutating and becoming other even as it moves toward a crescendo of a final act in time.

We know this but, in our desperation, to deny it we have built this accumulation of death to defy it. But we know we cannot deny what it is we are because it is already too late, way too late to stop what it is we are. Maybe this is what Siratori in his new diagnosis is telling us. We are in process, mutating beyond the human like some many flecks of flesh slowly changing into something beautiful but unknown and unknowable.

Like all elegies we are taking a last look at what we were mournful of the strangeness of what was and yet in our secret hearts knowing this is good, the only good thing that could be. We are saying goodbye to ourselves. Not quite ready to say hello to the thing we're becoming we shed our tears over the vestiges of flesh that is dying and mutating like a blade of grass in the wind...

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